

**In the Claims**

Claims 1-25 (Cancelled)

26. (Currently amended) In an immunoassay device having a housing with at least one opening therethrough for introduction of a liquid sample into the housing, a porous matrix material and at least one immunological reagent in dried form in said housing, the improvement comprising: a desiccant material in said housing, wherein said desiccant is capable of retarding deterioration of said reagent.

27. (New) The device of claim 26, wherein the housing comprises a first compartment and a second compartment, wherein the second compartment is associated with and separate from the first compartment, and wherein the desiccant material is positioned in the second compartment.

28. (New) The device of claim 27, wherein the second compartment comprises the desiccant material.

29. (New) The device of claim 27, wherein when the second compartment is associated with the first compartment, a desiccant-like environment is maintained in the first compartment.

30. (New) The device of claim 27, wherein the porous matrix material and the immunological reagent are positioned in the first compartment.

31. (New) The device of claim 28, wherein the second compartment comprises a polymer and silica.

32. (New) The device of claim 31, wherein the polymer is polystyrene.

33. (New) An immunoassay device comprising:

- a) a housing with at least one opening therethrough for the introduction of a liquid sample into the housing, and wherein the housing comprises a first compartment and a second compartment;
- b) a web of porous material positioned in said first compartment;
- c) one or more immunological reagent(s) in dried form in said first compartment; and
- d) a desiccant material comprised in said second compartment, wherein said desiccant material is capable of retarding deterioration of said reagent(s) when said second compartment is associated with said first compartment.

34. (New) The device of claim 33, wherein the second compartment is separate from the first compartment.

35. (New) The device of claim 33, wherein the second compartment is separable from the first compartment.

36. (New) The device of claim 33, wherein the second compartment comprises a polymer and silica.

37. (New) The device of claim 36, wherein the polymer is polystyrene.

38. (New) The device of claim 33, further comprising a prefilter situated in fluid communication with said matrix material.

39. (New) In an immunoassay device having a housing with at least one opening therethrough for introduction of a liquid sample into the housing, a web of porous material in said housing, and a prefilter situated in fluid communication with said web material and at least one immunological reagent in dried form in said housing, wherein the housing comprises a first

compartment and a second compartment, wherein the second compartment is associated with and separate from the first compartment, the improvement comprising:

a desiccant material in said housing, wherein said desiccant is capable of retarding deterioration of said reagent.